

Wednesday, May 25, 2011

WASHINGTON – Today, Congressman Tim Ryan called on Ohio state lawmakers to oppose bills in the Ohio legislature that will result in voter suppression. Currently pending in the Ohio State House and Senate, S.B 148 and H.B 194 make sweeping changes to Ohio election laws that would limit access and availability to voting.

“These efforts at the Statehouse to restrict voting access are a transparent attack on our civil rights as Ohioans and Americans,” said Ryan. “These ‘reforms’ undeniably make it harder to vote, harder to register to vote, take away local control, and invalidate more people’s ballots. This measure draws the wrong kind of attention to Ohio, and to pretend that this is anything other than voter suppression insults the intelligence of our citizens.”

“These bills seem to continue a disturbing pattern set with Senate Bill 5 where some Ohio lawmakers appear more interested in consolidating political power than helping those they’re elected to protect.” continued Ryan.

Specifically, S.B. 148 and H.B. 194 include the following changes that will limit access to the polls:

- Eliminates the period dubbed “Golden Week” during which citizens can simultaneously register to vote and vote early.
- Restricts opportunities to vote early by mail and in-person.
- Prohibits county board of elections from providing voters with early vote request forms via mail.

Some versions of these bills have also included a requirement that voters present a state issued identification card in order to vote. Respected election law expert Dan Tokaji from The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law has likened this provision to a “poll tax.”

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